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TOGO

30 October 1959

VI. GENERAL DATA

A. Population: In 1956 the population of Togo was estimated to be 1,095,000 Africans and 1,300 Europeans.

B. Area: 21,000 square miles.

C. Topography: Togo is a narrow north-south strip of land lying just east of Ghana and having only 31 miles of Atlantic coastline. A ridge of high land about 70 miles wide, called Chaine du Togo runs through the length of the territory from south-southwest to north-northeast and separates the small part of the Oti River lowlands that lie in northwestern Togo from the Mono and other coastal rivers on the southeast. The highest and widest part lies between 50 and 100 miles from the coast and contains Mt. Agou (3,445 feet), the highest elevation. From here northward elevations are lower and slopes gentler. Very little terrain is higher than 2,000 feet and most of the hills have rounded summits, but the impression is that of a mountainous land -- bold and picturesque, with deep forested valleys, isolated hills, and sheer slopes.

D. Climate: The greater part of Togo is hot all year and moist most of the year, but the highlands between 1,000 and 2,000 feet are the least unpleasant. Two distinct temperature and rainfall regimes, differentiated by distance from the coast, prevail.

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North of 7°N there is one wet season in the northern summer and one dry season in the northern winter. March-April to October is the period of the southwest monsoon, thunderstorms, general rains in the hills, and oppressively high humidity. This season is usually ushered in and out by violent thunderstorms. Rainfall totals less than 60 inches -- low for the tropics -- but its concentration in 7 or 8 months makes this a distinctly wet season. Although it is also the cooler season, temperatures are not enough lower to provide comfortable conditions except at the higher elevations; maxima usually range from 80° to 100°F , and minima from 70° to 80°F , with a diurnal range of 15°F or less. Humidity is uncomfortably high, with percentages in the 70's and 80's. In some respects, October to March is a more livable season since it has little or no rain, almost cloudless skies, a dry northwest wind called the Harmattan, and a diurnal range of 20 degrees or more. The wind, however, brings dust from the Sahara and only partial relief from the humidity, and daytime temperatures are in the 90's.

South of 7°N , the dry season (northern winter) is also nearly rainless; but the rainy season (northern summer) is interrupted by a short dry season from July to September. Annual rainfall is lower than in the north -- only 30 to 40 inches. On the coast, however, the monotonous warm moisture of the southwest monsoon pervades the air during every month except for brief interruptions in December and January when the Harmattan blows.

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